

REMARKS

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC §112 ¶1

The examiner rejects claims 1-8 for lack of adequate written description. Applicants reiterate that the language introduced into the specification was either inherent in the disclosure as originally filed or supported by the disclosure found in Sachse (US 6,015,379), which was expressly incorporated by reference.

The examiner is correct in requiring more precise citation to the sources from which the amendment language was derived. Applicants respectfully submit the following list of specific citations within the expressly incorporated patent wherein most of the introduced subject matter may be found:

Column 1, lines 49-54, Column 2, lines 35-36 and 39-46, Column 3, lines 2-8, 26-27, and 30-31, Column 4, lines 35-37 and 39-40, Column 5, lines 60-61, Column 6, lines 23-27, 31-37, 44-49, and 57-67, Column 7, lines 5-6 and 17-22, and Figure 1.

Further, some of the language from originally filed claims 1-5 was introduced into the specification through these amendments.

If the examiner has any specific concerns regarding language introduced through these amendments, applicants welcome inquiries by telephone, as well as through office actions.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC §112, ¶2

Applicants have amended claim 1 to make more clear that the transverse stiffening arises from the stiffening strips produced as a result of applying and curing a

homogenous liquid. Given the new language of the claims, and the language found in the specification, applicants respectfully submit that the phrase "homogenous material" would be sufficiently definite to one of skill in the art.

In claims 1 and 2, the phrases "solid connection" and "firm connection" have been removed, and the concept of "adhering," taken from the original claims, has been reintroduced in their place.

The term "so-called" has been removed from claim 3.

Regarding "by means of a temperature change" in claim 5, applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would readily understand whether an increase or a decrease in temperature, and the amount thereof, is required to effect the necessary curing for a particular material.

Claims 6 and 7 have been canceled.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC §102(B) AND §103(A)

Given the present claim amendments, applicants submit that the differences between Evans and the present invention are now more clearly indicated. As the examiner correctly indicates, Evans teaches a soft elastic support having a semi-rigid stiffener made from Buna N. This stiffener is "adhered to the support [using an] adhesive," and may be further covered by a second support piece (col.2:18-21, 35-37). The support disclosed therein neither teaches nor suggests the presently claimed invention.

In particular, the stiffener is not applied as a liquid and subsequently cured to become stiff. Rather, an already-cured stiffener is placed on the support using an adhesive which is not cured. Evans states that the stiffener is adhered using the adhesive designated with the number 13, which is "[a] pressure sensitive adhesive," and one which can "adhere the support to the [applicable] body member" (col.2:17-19, col.1:34-37). If the adhesive in that embodiment were to be cured, it would not maintain its adhesive abilities. If the adhesive in the second embodiment of Evans were to be cured and stiffened, the entire support would lose its flexibility, and would be useless for the purposes to which it is intended to be employed. Accordingly, Evans neither teaches nor suggests all present claim limitations, and can neither anticipate nor make the present invention obvious.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 USC §102(b)/§103(a) be withdrawn.

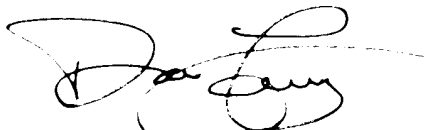
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants consider that the rejections of record have been obviated and respectfully solicit passage of the application to issue.

Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including Extension of Time fees to Deposit Account No. 11-0345. Please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Hans SACHSE. Serial No. 09/976,073

Respectfully submitted,
KEIL & WEINKAUF

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David C. Liechty", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David C. Liechty
Reg. No. 48,692

1350 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202)659-0100

DCL/kas